

TYPIFICATION AND APPLICATION OF THE
NAMES *SCIRPUS AMERICANUS* PERS.,
S. OLNEYI GRAY, AND *S. PUNGENS* VAHL

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The names *Scirpus americanus* Pers. (Syn. Pl. 1: 68. 1805) and *Scirpus pungens* Vahl (Enum. Pl. 2: 255. 1805) are usually applied to the same species by Cyperologists (Beetle, 1947; Koyama, 1963). The former name for plants commonly known as Three-square in North America presently receives widespread usage because of priority. Data from type specimens and original descriptions now make it apparent that these names should be applied to different species. The type of *S. americanus* (Hab. in Carolinâ inferiore, Herb. Michx., P) is conspecific with plants usually treated (Beetle, 1947; Koyama, 1963) as *S. olneyi* Gray (Bost. Journ. Nat. Hist. 5: 238. 1845). The type of *S. pungens* (Erhart misit, Herb. Vahl, C) is conspecific with plants usually treated (op. cit.) as *S. americanus*.

In his original description of *Scirpus americanus*, Persoon cites Michaux's description of *S. triqueter* L. (Fl. Bor.-Am. 1: 30. 1803.) and gives the habitat as "in Carolina inferiore." The specimens on the sheet thus named and labeled in Michaux's herbarium at P have strongly winged culms, short involucre bracts, shallowly cleft scales, small achenes, and broad bristles characteristic of plants resembling the type of *S. olneyi* (Rhode Island, Providence, *Olney*, GH). Thus the correct name for plants usually treated as *S. olneyi* is *S. americanus*.

In the original description of *Scirpus pungens*, Martin Vahl gave the habitat as, "in Europa, in insula Borboniae. Commerson." The specimen from Vahl's herbarium designated as the type probably was collected in Europe and also contains the word "pungens Vahl" presumably in the handwriting of Jens Vahl, son of Martin Vahl. No specimen labeled, "in insula Borboniae," or collected by Commerson has been located. The triangular culms, long involucre

bracts, deeply cleft scales, and narrow bristles are characteristics of plants usually but incorrectly treated as *S. americanus*. *Scirpus pungens* is the earliest available name for these plants.

The literature cited by Vahl is also in accordance with his description and the designated type specimen. The cited illustrations of Morrison (Pl. Hist. Univ. Oxon. s. 8, t. 10, f. 20. 1699.) and Plukenet (Algm. Bot. t. 40, f. 1. 1696.) closely resemble the type specimen of *Scirpus pungens*. Roth's descriptions of *S. mucronatus* L. (Tent. Fl. Germ. 1: 23. 1788, and 2: 60. 1789.) and *S. triqueter* L. (Neue Beytr. 1: 91. 1802.) cited by Vahl best apply to plants resembling the type specimen of *S. pungens*. Apparently Roth was confused about the identity of *S. mucronatus* and *S. triqueter*, and incorrectly applied the names to plants of *S. pungens*.

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